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# KING RICHARD THE THIRD AND LADY ANNE:

## AN HISTORICAL LEGEND OF CROSBY HALL.

BY THOMAS MILLER.

### CHAPTER I.

LADY ANNE.—What is it?

GLO'STER.—That it may please you leave these sad designs

To him that hath more cause to be a moorner,

And presently repaired to CROSBY PLACE,

Where—I will with all expedient duty see you.

LADY ANNE.—With all my heart; and much it joys me too,

To see you are become so penitent.—

Tressel, and Berkeley, go along with me.

SHAKSPEARE.

THE bell of Saint Helen's Priory was ringing for the evening vespers, when Lady Anne, with her attendants, reached the gloomy archway that led to the court-yard of Crosby Hall. The ponderous iron-studded gates were ajar, for Glo'ster had whispered to one of his followers to hurry on foremost, and have all in preparation for her reception. Two soldiers, who stood as guards, presented their halberds as the lady entered; menials were also ready, to take charge of the horses; and the sewer, with other officers, and serfs, of the household, were drawn up in readiness to welcome the Lady Anne to her new home.

"Canst thou conduct me to a private room, worthy seneschal," said the lady, addressing an old man over whose brow threescore winters had passed, "for I am ill at ease, and would fain remain alone until his Grace's arrival?"

"I wot not, good lady, of any other than the great dining-parlor, which is set apart for the guests of his royal Grace," replied the old man, "methinks that is most remote from the din of the hall, and might of a verity meet your will."

"It pleaseth me mightily, honest seneschal," answered the lady. "I would have thee conduct me thither."

The seneschal requested Bridget, a female who stood by, to accompany the lady; and they passed along the Great Hall, beyond the oriel window, by which a door was opened by a page in waiting, that led to the great dining-parlor.

"Nay, by our Lady, ye enter not here," said the page, confronting Tressel and Berkeley, who were preparing to follow their noble mistress; "none enter the western-wing, but by his Grace's permission."

"Out upon thee for an ill-natured churl," answered Berkeley; "hadst thou come to her Lady's dwelling, we would have given thee a cup of malmsey, ere we had made a stand at any door."

"By the mass," replied the page, "I thank thee for teaching me courtesy, though it belongs not to me to show his Grace's hospitality; but beshrew me, I will drink a cup with thee and thy fellow."

"Spoken like an honest page," said Tressel. "Go to now, why should we not make merry—marry, but this would be a fine place to troll a stave," proceeded Tressel, lifting up his eyes to the lofty roof: "by Saint Ann, there is no need to doff an helmet to enter."

"His Grace of Glo'ster hath a mind to give himself room enow to grow in," whispered Berkeley, who saw that the page had retired to order them refreshments; "I like not this sudden changing of our noble Mistress' mind, methinks it bodes

no good: saw ye ever a woman wooed in such a plight, good Tressel?"

"Never, by my faith! but there is no swearing for woman, I trow; beside, he had a tongue, might lure the devil to kneel and pray. She had a mind to use the sword, methought."

"So did I deem," answered Berkeley, "when that he said, 'twas I did kill your husband: by my troth, this is a changing world,—she, who did curse his wife, there to consent for to become that wife which she so cursed—I like it not, 't is enough to rouse the saints to work her wo."

"Marry, it matters not," replied Tressel; but, for the sake of her dear master, whom we all did love, we will attend her well. I hate this hump-backed duke, who will as soon let a man's blood out, as a cook will twist a capon; but see, the page beckons us to yonder table—by our Lady, this is a goodly hall, and well might vie with that at Westminster, in which we saw King Henry crowned."

The sun was now sinking in the west, and threw his last red beams upon the painted windows of the Hall, scattering a dying glory over the rush-strewn floor, which floated from the rich tints of shields emblazoned on the quaint-wrought pannels. Purple, and gold, and crimson, and azure from the fronts of stars, and the forms of rampant lions, glaring ruddily on the armorial bearings of barbaric heraldry; and saints shone dimly forth in twilight hues, darkened with excessive splendor, and grim warriors stood erect upon the oriel windows, clothed in scaly armor from head to foot, and flaming in various dyes, which the gaudy eye of the artist had fantastically given them. Boars heads, and griffins, and green dragons, and piled spears, and furred banners were all thereon enwrought, on which the crimson sunbeams burst, through every hue of the rainbow.

Around the Hall hung suits of armor—below the high windows, corsets and helms, with vizors and drooping plumes, gauntlets and greaves, and cuishes, with greenonilleries and iron shoes, and triangular shields. Some of these bore the dints of battle, or were broken in the joints, showing where the heavy battle-axe, or keen blade had pierced. Bows and arrows were also hung on high, and banners were suspended around, illuminated with rich bearings, which swayed to and fro as the breeze rushed in when the door was opened. Lamps were also suspended from the roof by long chains, which were let up and down by pulleys. The lamps were of an immense size, in the form of angels, all of iron; the flame issued from the tips of their wings when lighted, and as the wind swept through the apartment, they swung backward and forward with a creaking sound; the rushes on the floor were also swayed by the sudden gusts that at intervals entered and made a rustling sound. At one end of the Hall ran a long oaken gallery, richly carved after the manner of the period, in fic-cones and rude festoons, and the forms of cross-winged cherubs, with full-blown cheeks. In this gallery were the minstrels seated at festivals; behind it ran another division, broken into grotesque arches, and various openings, through which might be viewed the Hall, by those who wished not to mingle in the merriment; behind these were the private

apartments, for the guests or retainers of Glo'ster.

In the Hall were various groups; some in armor pacing up and down, their swords and spurs clanking at every tread as they walked in the centre, which was free from rushes. Others conversed apart in two's and three's their numbers increasing or decreasing as fancy guided them; all were busy with the rumor of Glo'ster's conquest over the Lady Anne, for many of them had been out to witness the removal of the remains of King Henry from St. Paul's, and were present when the duke compelled the bearers to set down the royal corpse. Some were seated at various tables, emptying the huge drinking-horns, or attacking the immense barons of cold beef, which stood piled in readiness for the attacks of every hungry follower who entered. Some helped themselves to large slices with their daggers, then washed down their repast with bumpers of old ale, leaving the unwiped foam upon their dark mustachios. Around the huge fire-place a group were collected, conversing in low tones, or laughing at the wit of the fool, who figured conspicuously among them, in his long ass's ears and bells, which jingled at every motion of his head. Two large dogs basked upon the hearth, and seemed to enjoy the cheerful blaze which issued from the wood-fire. A conversation was here carried on between the fool, and a dark-looking man who kept occasionally stirring the fire with the point of his sword.

"Methinks thou art preparing for some hot work to-night, uncle," said the jester, addressing the dark warrior, who kept stirring the logs with his weapon.

"Peace, fool," replied the other, "thou wilt never allow the thoughts in thy soft brains to cool."

"Marry, but thou art a cooling piece," persevered the fool, "and hast let out a deal of hot blood in thy day, at his Grace's bidding."

"Not so much," retorted the warrior, "as thou hast let out folly, when his Grace would have had thee silent."

"I know a thing, which if thou wast to let out, the Duke would not be silent," answered the jester.

"What is it?" inquired the warrior.

"Now out on thee for the veriest goose," replied the fool, "why the lady thou didst let in."

"By my troth," answered the warrior, "neither wouldst thou, for it would deprive thee of wagging thy bells at the wedding feast."

"I'll tell thee how to woo Alice," said the jester, if thou wilt be advised by a fool."

"Prythee proceed then," said the warrior, "for I have a liking to the maiden."

"Hearken, then! kill her brother!"

"Now by St. Paul, thou provest thyself a greater fool; wouldst that be the way to her heart?"

"Ask his Grace," replied the jester, "for so he won the Lady Anne by killing her husband. Men do woo like cats now; who kill a mouse, to win a spouse, and pur and pur, and show what they have done. Trust me, 'tis a killing world—wouldst have a large estate? kill the owner and take possession; for singing:

"For hikey pipey, high and high,  
Oh marry, quoth my ladye,  
For if two loves, oh one must die,  
So up and sharp thy bladey."

"Now out upon thee for a hoarse raven—see the Duke enters, attended by his Grace of Buckingham."

As they approached, all who were in the Hall drew toward the fire-place, leaving the two dukes to converse together at the south end, where they entered from under the balcony, by a private door which communicated with the lesser apartments.

"I will marry her to-morrow," said Glo'ster, "in the meantime do thou muster a few of our friends to grace the feast, and speak to the Bishop betimes that we may have no delay. Hearken, I have a motive for so doing." Here he spoke in a low tone, "but I must console her; for by my soul this sudden transition from weeping to wooing will have affected her ladyship. Look I sad, my lord? for I must put on a woful countenance, melancholy as those mutes who are trained to walk in mournful processions, who do moan and wail by the hour, not for the dead but for groats. Think not that I forget her curses; no, they shall return upon herself with tenfold force. Thou knowest I would be king, but first there is much work to do, and some there are must sleep in Abraham's bosom."

"I will talk with your Grace to-morrow," replied Buckingham, "till then, adieu."

For a few moments Glo'ster stood alone at the end of the Hall, biting his lip, and gazing upon the floor in deep meditation. At length he was aroused by the falling of the lamp-chains, which a menial had let down previous to lighting, for twilight was fast approaching, and the glare of fire grew stronger as it flashed upon the deep bay-window opposite, and the piled armor that glittered upon the walls, and the strong features of those who were assembled around it.

Turn now to the great dining-parlor, where the Lady Anne was seated in a high-backed oaken chair, gazing thoughtfully upon the sinking embers, which were only throwing out a fitful light, as some undecayed brand smouldered or blazed at intervals. Opposite to her, but at a respectable distance, sat Bridget Crosbie, whose father had built and given his name to the Hall. He had not long been dead, and Glo'ster had only hired the mansion for the term of seven years, after which Bridget was again to become sole possessor.

"Then thou dost not belong to his Grace's household, fair maiden," inquired Anne.

"No, my lady," answered Bridget; "it was rumored that you was coming hither and the Prioreess of St. Helens, with whom I bide at times, said it would be well for me to welcome you to the home of my fathers, as there were none but rude men at arms, who know more of the tug of war than the courtesy which should be shown a lady, and one of gentle blood, whom it behoves all to hold in high esteem."

"Saint Helen bless her," ejaculated Anne. "I had intended to be alone, for I have more of sorrow than I hope will befall thy lot, and it does grieve me much that I did hither come: but by thy presence, much that does oppress me has been soothed; comest thou often here?"

"It was my wont," replied Bridget, "until his Grace did put aside the old dark portraits, which hung in the large hall. My mother's and my father's pictures were among them, and I did love

to come and gaze on them for hours, when none beside were with me. But his noble Grace made plaint, that they did not stir up the minds of his followers to mighty deeds, and so resolved to hang those gloomy arms and armor in their places, which have cased so many goodly youths who all are dead. So he did move them to another room adjoining this, and I have power to come whenever it fits me best, to gaze upon them; but they look now as if they never were owners of this Hall, so closely are they forced together in the small ante-room, which I will show your ladyship anon."

While Bridget was conversing, the Duke had entered by a private door, which was concealed by the wainscoting, and stood gazing upon the Lady Anne unperceived. His face for the moment had lost its fierce demoniacal expression, his brow was unfurrowed, as if its dark workings had ceased at the sight of one so lovely. For Anne was clad in a rich mourning robe of black velvet, with her long raven curls unbound; and her beautiful countenance rendered more interesting by sorrow, with an unusual paleness upon her cheeks, her face seemed to wear in the dim twilight more of the repose of a habitant of Heaven, than one that belonged to this earth. As Glo'ster gazed upon her for a few moments his harsh features became unrelaxed; but when he thought how he had won her, even in the presence of the "bleeding witness of her hatred," and after having murdered her husband, his haughty brow gradually darkened, and his proud lip curled in its accustomed contempt, and ambition again reined his thoughts: but this was not for long, for forcing his features into repose, he stepped forth into the apartment, and extending his hand to Lady Anne, bade her "good even."

A slight shuddering pervaded the lady as she arose, and her head seemed to shrink by impulse from the salute he imprinted upon her cheek. After requesting Bridget Crosbie not to depart, he sat down for several minutes, and carried on a playful conversation, in which the ladies took a part, charmed by his wit and enamored of his discourse, for never did Satan when tempting our first mother in Eden talk more eloquently, or show greater powers of fascination. He then arose, stating that as the king was ill at ease, much of the business of the state devolved upon him, and under pretence of reading his despatches, he retired by the private door; and ascending the staircase, entered the apartment above, and there awaited the return of the ruffians whom he had appointed to murder his brother Clarence.

The room in which Glo'ster was seated had an entrance from the pleasure garden (the site of which is still retained in the old ground plans of the Hall, marked as "the void piece of land or pleasure,") by means of an external staircase,\* from which the great dining parlour was also entered by a private door, at which the Duke had gained access to the Lady Anne. But the apartment in which he now sat, for a long time retained the name of the Throne-room,† as it is

\* So late as 1756, a stair-case existed somewhere in this situation, for in that year Lambrooke Freeman, Esq., let to Joseph South and others for seventeen years, the "hall throne-room," and "free egress up and down the back stairs."

† These are the names given to these rooms in the oldest descriptions of the premises.

supposed to have been here where the crown was offered him, it is at present known as the council-chamber. The apartment was hung round with rich arras of crimson, on which was entwined a stag-hunt in golden tissue; horsemen and hounds glittered upon the drooping tapestry, and huntsmen lifted the bugle-horn to their lips, and by their swelling cheeks appeared to blow lustily; hills and heavy trees were thrown into rude perspective, and the dogs wore strange forms, some of them with heads like lions, for war was more cultivated than the arts. The beautiful ceiling was enriched with carved work, bunches of knot-grass, and festoons, and fir cones, and delicate trefoiled tracery. A splendid bay window looked into the court-yard; along the centre of the room ran a long oaken table, this was covered with cloth of gold, on which were laid innumerable piles of paper, plans of battles which had been fought, and of murders that had yet to be executed. The floor was covered with rushes, not scattered loosely as in the hall, but woven slightly together, after the manner of our rush door-mats; several heavy oaken chairs also stood in the room. In one of these sat Glo'ster, fronting the fire,\* busied in the perusal of a long sheet of parchment, which was written in a close cramped hand. An iron lamp in the form of a dolphin hung above his head, suspended from the ceiling, throwing its light upon an unsheathed sword, which lay on the table. His brows were closely knit, and while he read, his hand twice grasped, as if involuntarily, the hilt of a dagger which was stuck in his belt. At length a page entered splendidly dressed, and doffing his velvet cap, while the long white plumes swept the floor as he held it in his hand, he bowed his head and said, "There is one without, impatient to speak with your Grace."

"But one?" replied Glo'ster, "by Saint Paul there should be two of them! admit him!"†

The page retired, and a fierce-looking ruffian entered, clad in armor; he neither doffed his iron helmet, nor yet bowed, but striding up to within a few paces of the Duke, exclaimed in a deep hollow voice, "Clarence is murdered."

"What have you done with the body?" said Glo'ster.

"Left it in a vault," replied the ruffian, "until your Grace gives order for its being entombed."

"And your companion," said the Duke, "comes he not for the reward?"

"He gave me no assistance," answered the murderer, "and did sorely grieve that he had undertaken to be there, and fain would have persuaded me to have left the deed undone."

"Why did you not stab him to the heart?" exclaimed Glo'ster, rising from the chair as he spoke: "have you left him to escape?"

"He left me like a coward, as he is," replied the murderer, "and escaped; but he bid the Duke to look behind him, while I stabbed him in the back, then plunged him into the malmsey-but, head foremost, to make security more firm."

\* The old fire-place has been removed, but its situation is indicated by a modern one of extended dimensions. HISTORY OF CROSBY PLACE, by E. L. Blackburn.

† Glo'ster's.—When you have done, repair to Crosby Place; But sit, be sudden in the execution; With obdurate; do not hear him plead, For Clarence is well spoken.

MURDERER.—Tut, tut, my lord, we will not stand to prate. Talkers are no good doers. RICHARD III.

"Thou hast done well," answered Glo'ster; "I would that thou had'st cut thy comrade's throat; but, as thou sayest, he was necessary to the deed, and dare not to divulge. Died the Duke bravely?"

"No, your Grace," replied the murderer, "he did beseech us to return to you, and said you would reward us, if we spared his life."

"Poor shallow fool," said Glo'ster, and laughed loudly a horrid fiendish laugh, that echoed through the arched-chamber, and even startled himself at its sound; then, looking full in the ruffian's face, he said, "what is thy name?"

"Forest! your Grace," replied the murderer.

"And if thou would'st resolve to do me further service in this line, my good Forest, I would keep thee about my person, and see to it that thou fared'st well," said Glo'ster.

"I am at your Grace's service," replied Forest, "and shall be glad to do your bidding."

"Then here is thy reward," said the Duke, and lifting up the lid of a heavily iron-bound chest, he took out a handful of gold pieces, letting fall several upon the oaken-floor, as he presented them to Forest. "In a day or two, I will hold further converse with thee; in the meantime, I will add thee to the number of my retainers." Then, striking the table with the hilt of his dagger, as a summons for the page, he gave orders that Forest should be attended to, as one of his followers, and they quitted the apartment, leaving Glo'ster alone to his own dark thoughts.

The Duke again resumed his seat, and sat for several moments with his face buried in his hands, in profound thought. At length, the heavy arras moved upon the wall, making a rustling sound, which started him from his reverie, while gusts of wind continued at intervals to moan down the wide chimney. At length he arose from his seat, and began to pace to and fro in the apartment with rapid strides, muttering to himself in a low tone at first, but which gradually arose as his passion increased:

"I fain would spare their lives,—but curse the brats, they stand between me and the throne. I have shed blood enough to appease an enraged lion; but more must yet be shed, ere I attain the crown I grasp at. Clarence's death sits heavy on my soul just now—poor, weak, confiding Clarence! But why should I let thoughts like these unman me?—he might have died by other hands, and I shed not his blood; 'tis the base world that finds these instruments to do such damned works. And Forest! yes, he shall murder the princes when they do arrive. To-night, I hear, they sleep at Northampton: a few more nights, and they shall sleep, where!—what matter, though it be where I shall never go. This world was made for me to stir in: I will be King, if it be alone that I may have these lofty-headed lords kneel at my feet that I may spurn them. But I was born with teeth, and made to bite: surely my sire was a wolf, and from his nature I did draw this love of prey. And what are a few drops of blood!—all, all must die, and those I murder might do many crimes. No, I am no villain; but one who hurries souls from out this wicked world, to find a better place. Hark! methinks I'm like a child, who sees wild faces moving on the wall!—again! what sound is that? it

is like a dying groan, for so King Henry moaned when I stabbed him in the Tower, where but to night my brother died."

Glo'ster strained his eyes through the dull gleams of the room, for the iron-lamp burned dimly, and shed but an imperfect haze around. Sometimes the wind swept in fitful gusts from the wide chimney, and waved the faint flame aside, leaving that part where he stood in shadowy light. But soon a sound, as of a dying man, seemed to break through the door of the adjoining apartment, which was the Duke's sleeping room, and at length the heavy door swung wide open upon its grating hinges, and a dim-blue ghastly light issued from it, which gradually filled the space in which he stood. Big drops oozed from his brow, and he placed his hand upon the table to support himself, for his knees knocked together with fear, as a shrill scream rang through the mansion. At length Glo'ster snatched up his sword, and struck the table, but no page appeared; and again another sound arose—a horrid burst of fiendish laughter, chilling his very blood by its mockery. He tried to shout, but his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth, like one who attempts to call for help in a dream. Then rose a shadowy form from the lurid haze, and stood full in the centre of the open door, growing in darker relief as the horrid light increased, and pointing its bleeding hand to the Duke—and then a low, sepulchral voice, terrible even by its hollow solemn tone, exclaimed, without moving a pallid lip, for the sound seemed to issue from the earth, "Glo'ster! Glo'ster! Glo'ster! behold thy murdered brother!" Then came a silence more frightful than the sound, for even the wind seemed at that moment to hold its breath. Glo'ster attempted in vain to rally himself; the sword fell unconsciously from his grasp, and he made faint passes with his arm, as though he still held the weapon, uttering in husky accents, which seemed to choke themselves as they arose, "Avaunt, damned spirit! or come in the shape of some tiger or devil—any—any,—but thine own—I did not the deed—'twas—'twas—"

"By thy command, false Glo'ster," answered the phantom: "again will I visit thee—then thou shalt know that thy hour is at hand."

The spirit then vanished, as though it sank through the floor, and the room was again enveloped in gloom, saving the faint ray which gleamed from the dying lamp as it shot up its feeble flame fitfully. But the Duke had fallen, and lay like one dead, among the scattered rushes,—not a sound reigned in the apartment.

## CHAPTER II.

STANLEY.—Come madam, you must straight to Westminster, There to be crowned Richard's royal Queen.

LADY ANNE.—And I with all unwillingness will go.

O would to God, that the inclusive verge  
Of golden metal that must round my brow  
Were red-hot steel, to scorch me to the brain!  
Anointed let me be with deadly venom,  
And die, ere man can say—God save the Queen.

RICHARD III.

MORNING again arose, and the bright beams of a summer sun fell full upon the deep-dyed windows of Crosby Hall. The menials had all arisen; some were busied in looking after the steeds, others in preparing for the marriage, which was to take place on that day between the Duke of

Glo'ster and the Lady Anne. Several had been engaged all night in cooking huge barons of beef, and sheep and hogs were roasted whole, which when cold were to be placed before the numerous retainers of the Duke, at the lower end of the hall. Game of almost every description lay dead in the out-houses ready for dressing, fawns and fallow-deer, and boars'-heads, for they paid but little regard as to what was in season. Heath and wood, and mountain and river, had been compelled to give up their inhabitants, to furnish forth the marriage-feast at Crosby Hall; for as Glo'ster intended at once to seize upon the crown, he deemed it prudent to collect as many followers around his table as could possibly be seated. Tables stood in readiness for the guests, extending the whole length of the hall, with the exception of a passage left at each end for the servants in waiting to pass to and fro. Under the minstrel gallery was placed the orsille, or high table, elevated above the rest; this was set apart for the nobles, and the line of division was also marked by a huge silver salt-cellar; the cloth too that covered it was distinguished from the others, being bordered with flowers of gold. Below the salt-cellar was placed another table, a little elevated from that adjoining, beneath; this was set apart for the knights, each being seated according to his rank, and was also covered with a cloth of less value. The others were strong oaken tables, wholly uncovered, and reached down beyond the large fire-place. On the upper table, or orsille, stood drinking vessels of gold and silver. A rich throne covered with crimson velvet was also fixed at the head of it, which was the seat appointed for the Duke and his consort. Green branches were suspended from various parts of the hall, flowers were also strewn upon the floor. Dishes of silver, gold, brass, and pewter glittered upon the dinner tables, while on the uncovered oaken ones were seen long rows of wooden trenchers. The royal banner of England hung over the crimson canopy, making a deep shadow where its heavy silken folds drooped, while the emblazoned arms were reflected on the burnished vessels beneath. It was placed there by Glo'ster's command, he being the Protector during the minority of the prince of Wales, and had been removed for that purpose from the Tower during the night. The Duke's banner also was suspended from the minstrel's gallery, hanging high above the royal flag of England.

About two hours before noon Glo'ster entered the hall, unattended; he looked unusually sad, and walking slowly forward with his hands behind him, he came to the upper table, and throwing himself into the seat or temporary throne, he folded his arms across his bosom, and sat for several minutes occupied in deep thought. The rich banner hung above him, casting its shadow over his face, and making the dense furrows on his brow appear more gloomy; a slight quivering was visible on his upper lip, his eyes too occasionally flashed wildly, and his hands trembled, all evident signs that he had passed a restless night. At length he summoned a page to bring him wine, who soon attended, bearing a gold cup in his hand, which the Duke emptied at a draught. Buckingham and the Bishop of Ely were soon after announced, and Glo'ster arose to

welcome them. After some short conversation, the Bishop retired into the chapel on the eastern side of the hall, and left the two Dukes alone.

"The brat has arrived," said Buckingham, "and sends his services to your Grace. By heavens, my lord, he hath a froward tongue."

"Which we will clip with speed," answered Glo'ster, "ere he be many hours older. I will meet this baby prince anon; to night he sleeps with York in the Tower; to-morrow night, and all be well, he sleeps in Abraham's bosom. Saw you Hastings? will he grace our wedding?"

"No, by our Lady," replied Buckingham, "he said that he must pay his devoir to the prince, and would meet your Grace with the council in the Tower this afternoon. Methinks Shore's wife did motion him to stay, for she was by during our conference."

"Now, by Saint Paul, may I never see the light again," said Glo'ster, "if he ever leaves the Tower with his head on. As for that strumpet Shore, she shall do penance when I am king."

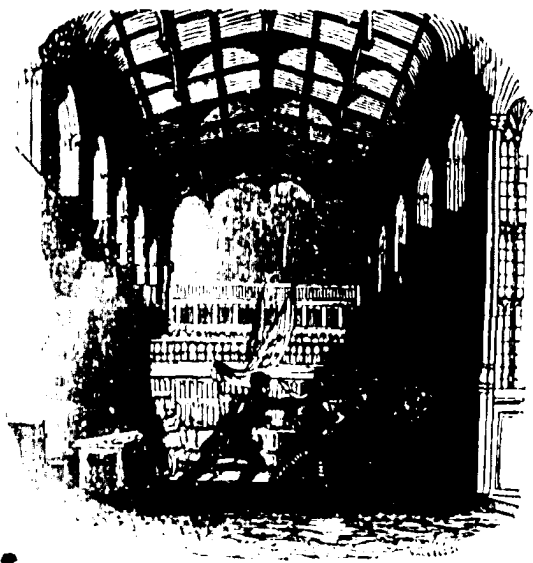
"It were well to humble her pride, answered Buckingham; "but by heaven she is a goodly dame,—such eyes and lips, and such majestic gait! Marry! she looked more lovely than when seated by Edward's side, adorned like a queen. There was sadness, too, upon her brow which did conspire, with all her other beauties, to make her look more like our Lady's face that hangs in Westminster."

"Come cousin," said Glo'ster, smiling, "if thou goest on this way, I shall conclude that thou art only waiting for Hastings' death to wed her; thou art of a surety bewitched by her charms, for never did I hear thee praise woman as before. What think'st thou of my Lady Anne; would'st wed her, if she consented?"

"No, by the Holy Mother," said Buckingham, "I would not, nor any one who cursed so deeply as she did curse your Grace but yesterday, and yet she's not ill-favored. But see, she comes! by heaven! lovely as an angel-form: nay, now if I was asked to have her for myself, methinks I would repent me of my oath, and answer 'yes;' and one hangs on her arm too, exceedingly beautiful."

While Buckingham was speaking, the Lady Anne approached accompanied by Bridget Crosby, who was arrayed in white, and might have rivalled by her charms the famed Houris of Mahomet's Paradise. The Lady Anne, who appeared the most stately of the two, had her train borne by two young maidens, while four others of equal beauty followed behind. Their dresses were of rich white silk, embroidered with silver flowers. Anne's excelled the others in the richness of its ornaments, her train being of white satin-velvet with a border of golden stars. The sunbeams fell upon them from the gaudy windows, mingling a thousand hues with the splendor of their drapery.

As Glo'ster and Buckingham approached them, a band of musicians struck up a lively air from the gallery in which they were stationed. Just then the hall-doors were thrown open, and upward of a hundred nobles and knights entered and joined the train, in exact order, filing off in the direction of the chapel, in which the ceremony was about to take place. As soon as the



wedding train had departed, the hall was nearly filled with the followers of Glo'ster, and the adherents of other lords who were his friends. Lovel and Catesby were also among them, and having had their instructions were busied in sounding the praises of the Duke among the soldiers, while the menials were preparing the banquet against the return of the party from the chapel.

"How now, my man of war!" said Catesby, "art thou in love with that banner which thou gazest on so fixedly?" addressing a man in armor.

"Marry! I have loved it ere now," replied the soldier, "and shown many a brave fellow down the gateway of darkness in its defence, but methinks it be long enough ere I shall be called upon again to guard its golden lions."

"Why thinkest thou so?" inquired Catesby.

"Nay, by my troth," replied the soldier, "I should be wanting to think otherwise, when children are to become our rulers; what need we of banners, unless they are to be hung in the nursery?"

"But is not the Duke of Glo'ster Protector?" said Catesby: "now by the mass, I thought thou hadst known his Grace better than to have supposed that he would long let a soldier remain idle."

"I have seen his Grace active enough I trow, when in the field of Tewksbury," answered the soldier; "but men reigned then as kings, not beardless brats, like this young imp of Edward's just loosened from his leading-strings."

"Thou art a damned traitor," answered another soldier who bore the arms of Hastings upon his helmet, and had been listening to the follower of Buckingham, for such he was, who conversed with Catesby; "none but a cut-throat knave like thee would speak against the royal prince."

"Hast thou been to shrift this morning," said

the follower of Buckingham contemptuously, "that thou dost dare to beard me thus, or has Mistress Shore, thy master's ruler, insured thy life, that thou takest such license with thy tongue?"

"Thou art not my confessor," replied the soldier, "neither shall I answer thee but as a loyal subject, which I am, and thou a poor mean-hearted traitor, who instead of upholding the young king, wouldst take 'vantage of his youth and take part with those whose hands are ready now to strip him of his rights."

"Were not this a day of merry-making," answered the follower of Buckingham, unsheathing his sword, "by the cave of hell I would cut out that mischief-making tongue of thine, and throw thy body into the court-yard."

"Thou art a mean braggart," retorted the soldier, also drawing his sword, "a base varlet. I saw thee in Guild-hall throw up thy helmet and shout for King Richard, when that thy master, Buckingham, attempted to poison the ears of the good citizens with forged lies touching the honest birth of our young King Edward. Go to, thou art a villain!"

"Nay, now thou hast reflected on the good Duke, whom I serve," answered the follower of Buckingham, "I call thee villain in return, and thus confirm it;" saying which he aimed at him a blow with his sword, which the other dexterously parried, rushing in upon his opponent at the same time, and bearing him to the floor, where he would have despatched him, had not Catesby interfered, and Glo'ster and his party at the same moment re-entered the hall, which was in the greatest tumult.

"What means this?" exclaimed Glo'ster, quitting the arm of the Lady Anne and springing forward with his sword uplifted, "are ye Turks that ye must be at each others' throats on every occasion, disturbing by your brawls the quiet of

our mansion : for shame, put up your swords. My Lord of Buckingham, this is a follower of yours. I pray you learn their quarrel and inform me of it."

Here Catesby interposed, and began to narrate all that our readers are already acquainted with, trying however to throw the blame upon the follower of Hastings. Glo'ster knit his brows, and bidding them to keep at peace, and join the feast, went and seated himself by the Lady Anne, who already occupied the throne. Drums and trumpets and cymbals also began to sound, as the signal for commencing the banquet. Barons of beef, and hogs, and sheep, stood upon the table on huge silver vessels and large dishes of pewter. Game of every description was also there, smoking, and sending up their savory steam to the lofty roof of the hall. At the high table where Glo'ster presided, the greatest order was preserved, and as the different dishes appeared, they were cut off, then passed to the next table, where the knights were seated, and from them handed to the common soldiery, or servants, at the lower end. Wine was circulated on every hand without distinction, saving that the costliest vessels were placed at the upper end; but even the soldiers had their beer-horns filled with it on that day, with orders to drink *ad libitum*. A hundred voices were in conversation at a time, and as the wine circulated the noise increased; mirth and laughter reigned unbounded at the lower tables of the hall. Even Buckingham was uttering soft words to the fair Bridget Crosby who was seated beside him.

And Glo'ster also had succeeded in drawing faint smiles from his fair bride, to whom he was very attentive, for her beauty on that day would, for a moment, have divested the devil of evil thoughts to work wo upon one so lovely.

"Seest thou, Anne," said Glo'ster, "how closely my Lord Buckingham is besieging sweet Bridget? By my dukedom, she is a comely wench; and many a coronet has sat on brows less lovely."

"She is worthy of a place in a prince's heart," answered Anne; "were I a lord I'd sooner wed her than many a haughty dame who holds her head highly in the dignity of titles, for Bridget hath that which rank giveth not,—a faithful heart, and a clear conscience."

"Have not all women faithful hearts?" inquired Glo'ster, fixing his dark eyes upon Anne as he spake.

"Faithful enough, I trow," replied Anne, coloring highly as she spoke, "when, like Bridget, they are a guerdon worthy of being received,—rich in their own first love, and free from all attainments."

"Now, by the Holy-rod, thou speakest in parables to me," said Glo'ster, for I have always deemed that woman's heart was like her kirtle,—easily altered to the latest fashion."

"Thou mayest have deemed rightly," replied Anne, "but in sooth it is then only an old kirtle;—however its new form may gloze it, the eye-lets of the former needles remain, and though it be a costly stuff, 't is of less value than the shepherd's new gaberdine."

"Thou hittest me hard, fair wife," answered Glo'ster, knitting his brow. "What thinkest thou of the crown, then? it descends by entail;

beslrew me, thou canst not say but it is new to him who never wore it before."

"I grant ye that, my lord," replied Anne, "so are its cares; but yet methinks that he who wears it should also have a charmed life, for 't is the magnet that draws down the steel, and entails, but seldom does embar, the blade's approach. I wot not how it first became a curse; but he who wears it is enmired in bale. He is the target which ambition aims at."

"How now," inquired Glo'ster, turning to his page, who had long waited to address him.

"Your Grace's presence is desired at the Tower," said the page.

"We will be there anon," replied Glo'ster: "come, my lord of Buckingham, and Ely, we must leave these fair ladies for a time, for graver matters crave our attention.—I beg you to attend me to the Council." Then, addressing his guests generally, he arose and said, "Let not our absence be a dump upon your mirth. Whatever Glo'ster owns, is yours; I see many a face among you, that has with me looked on the storm of battle, and fought it bravely by my side, in many a well-won field—to all I say, make merry now. There have been nights when we have made our shields our pillows, and slept with naked swords grasped in our hands, wearied with long fatigue, quick march, and breathless charge; but then, we murmured not, for victory kept watch around us, and glory made our slumbers light with golden dreams. We had no wine cups then, soldiers, to make merry with as now; but I, your leader, shared the same fatigue—slept on the self-same field—felt the same midnight wind steal o'er my limbs—quenched my thirst at the same meadow-stream, where hundreds knelt to drink. Who is there here can say that Glo'ster wrapt his limbs in feathery down, when his brave followers pressed the dewy sod (none! none! rolled from a hundred voices.) I cannot forget your brave deeds at the field of Tewkesbury," continued Glo'ster, "when we humbled the pride of the house of Lancaster to the earth, and took captive their only hope. Since then, the rose of York has raised its head, and still waves unmolested. I call on you to rally round your Protector, that he may guard the prize." ("Long live King Richard!" rose like the sound of thunder, and echoed through the vaulted hall.) "I thank you, friends, but that is not my wish: but should the crown fall into feeble hands, it will be time for me to guard it then, and keep it safe from those who long in vain have sought it. Never shall the royal Lion that has so long floated in victory, over many a bloody field, fall to the earth unclaimed, while Glo'ster's hand can lift it, and swords like yours can hem him round in safety."

As he uttered the last sentence, he seized the royal banner of England in his hand, and waved it aloft amid the shouts of "Long live King Richard!" "Long live brave Glo'ster!" "No baby King!"

The color quitted the Lady Anne's cheek as she lifted up her eyes to gaze on the Duke, who stood with flushed brow on the throne, holding the flag at arm's length, in a warlike attitude, and pointing with his drawn sword to the rich emblazoning enwrought thereon. The guests in the hall also stood up, and loud buzzas, and the waving

of drinking vessels, and deafening shouts, mingled with the sound of music, and the cries of "Long live Richard the Third!"

When the din had a little subsided, Glo'ster and his attendants took their departure, for their steeds had long been waiting in the court-yard. The Lady Anne, with Bridget Crosby and other ladies, also arose, and left the hall amid the drunken cheers of the guests, and entered the great dining parlor. But even there the noise of the revelers penetrated as they broke out at intervals in rude songs, or drank to the long reign of Richard. For many of Buckingham's followers were there, and had received instructions to prepare the minds of all present for the information that Glo'ster would soon be king.

It does not come within the limits of our tale to follow Glo'ster to the Tower, and describe his interview with Hastings, whom he caused to be beheaded a few hours after his departure from the banquet, neither have we space to follow all his actions until he obtained the crown; we shall confine ourselves more particularly to those which took place at Crosby Hall.

Another morning had arisen, and all sounds of revelry were hushed in the hall, some of the guests had fallen asleep upon the floor, and there remained during the night, others had retired to their homes; and the Lady Anne, attended by Bridget Crosby, who had now become her confident, were walking in the pleasure, or pleasure-garden that extended behind the north end of the building.

It was a beautiful spot, laid out after the quaint manner of the period, and contained many of those old flowers whose names we have yet retained, and many of them are now only to be found in their wild state. Hedges of box were cut into grotesque forms, peacocks and dragons, and fish, and fanciful shapes which had no living forms. By the side of moss-roses and sweet-williams, grew wind-flowers, and canterbury-bells, and ad-ders-tongue, and cuckoo-flowers, heart's ease and true-love, and many others, which were supposed to flower only on particular days, dedicated to different saints. Anne appeared dejected, and walked along the serpent-like, gravel paths in silence, sometimes glancing on Bridget's face, then on the ground.

"I have a great love for flowers," said Bridget. "Father Philip maintains that many of them are holy, and blow in honor of the saints."

"He is right I trow," answered the Lady Anne, "for I have often taken note of the Christmas rose, which beareth flowers at that time, and hath wrought many miracles, which the good fathers at Glastonbury avouch. The snow-drop also appeareth about the time of Purification, an emblem of purity."

"And the yellow crocus," said Bridget, "puts forth on good St. Valentine's day, and the daisy on St. Margaret's for it is Margaret's herb, and I have some rhymes written by one Geoffrey Chaucer, where he says,

[ And in special one called so of the day,  
The day's-eye, a flower white and red.  
And in French called LA BELLE MARGUERITE,  
O commendable flower and most in mind."

Which we do even now call Margaret's flower."

"And the early daffodil," said Anne, "blows

on St. David's day, and the golden pilewort, on St. Perpetua's, and the crown-imperial never fails to appear on the celebration of St. Edward."

"Marry but our lady's-smock is a flower that always obeys the Holy Virgin's behest, and cometh to commemorate her annunciation; a true type of her innocence are its silvery bells," said Bridget.

"So have I deemed in sooth," replied Anne, "that the bright marigold is like the glory that circles her holy brow, and Father Ambrose avouches that it was named Mary's-gold, after the halo that emanates therefrom, which we see enwrought on the chapel-window; the blue-bell also cometh on St. George's day, for it was a color he loved when on earth, and a flower he held sacred."

"And I have made comment of many," said Bridget, "that others have made no mention of, such as the yellow-flag, flowering on St. Nicodemede, and the red-poppy on St. Barnabas' day, and the scarlet-lychin on St. John the Baptist's; but most white flowers appear in honor of the Blessed Virgin, and the white-lily never fails to grace the day of her visitation, but the midsummer-rose always begins to fade at the feast of Mary Magdalen."

"There are many mysteries hidden in flowers I trow," replied the Lady Anne, "signs and resemblances that we wot not of, and deep meanings which were known to the holy fathers of old, but are now forgotten; I would that we were conversant with all their types, and sacred emblems."

They had by this time reached an old summer-house, dark with the twines of ivy, and redolent with the perfume of woodbine, and here they seated themselves, listening to the birds that chanted their merry songs from the surrounding trees—for the wealth of acres stretched out behind Crosby Hall, rich in gardens and pastures, and fruitful orchards.

"I feel very spiritless this morning, sweet Bridget," said Anne, sighing deeply; "I had but little sleep all night long, and what I had, was broken by frightful dreams, enough to make a brave heart blanch; my husband too, awoke me, thrice calling on Clarence, and on Hastings in his sleep, and trembling like a guilty wretch, whose reckoning hour is come."

"I do not love his Grace," said Bridget, "so well as I was wont; methinks there was but little need to take off Hastings's head, as they did yesterday."

"And is the good Lord dead?" said Lady Anne; "ah, well-a-day, and I did fear 't was so. Bridget, it will be my turn next to die, for in his sleep last night I heard him mutter my name, as if he thought that I was pleading for my life; I heard him say distinctly, 'Anne my wife must die,' and then he clutched me fiercely by the arm, until I shrieked for pain, and he awoke and said, 'hush! hush! 't was but a dream.'"

"Holy Mary shield us!" ejaculated Bridget; "in sooth I do believe, that in our dreams we are forewarned of things that come to pass, and that good saints do visit us in visions, and that the spirits of those we loved, or have injured, hover around our pillows, blessing us in sleep or filling our minds with thoughts of bale, and terrible images."

"Oh, Bridget!" exclaimed Anne, "my con-



science oft reproaches me, and my heart quails within me, when I think of those who are no more; and all that I have loved and doated on, are gone; indeed I would not wish to live, and yet I fear to die. I dreamed last night, that the young princes lay lifeless on a wild sea-shore, and oh! methought their cold dead fingers were pointed to me; and as I gazed, a huge wave came and washed me in the sea, and on the yeasty waves we all three rode—the living and the dead! and that the foam in its fierce fury loosened their pale arms, and then they clasped me, cold as chilling ice, and then a voice came from the deep—it sounded like my Edward's—and called me to come away; and then, methought the waves assumed Glo'ster's face, and that on every ridge his arm arose grasping a bloody sword, the very same with which he slew my lord at Tewkesbury. Then the scene changed, and I was here in Crosby Hall in bed alone, and men in armor came, with daggers in their hands, and held a lamp above my head, and as one uplifted his arm to strike me, I shrieked with fear and woke; and then I slept again, and the same men appeared with lights and daggers. Oh Bridget, I do fear that ere many more days are darkened, I shall have run my race; but I am half prepared, such bodings are true warnings."

"Ah me! I like not your dream, lady," said Bridget, "and in these large chambers, and winding galleries, any one might come and take away our lives ere one could cry 'God help me.' I would my father were alive and in this home again, and you would leave these plotting courtiers, and dwell with us. Make known unto the prioress your fears, methinks she would protect you, for no one dare to invade the sanctity of the Priory."

"Thou deemest wrong fair Bridget," replied Anne; "the assassin's dagger hath reached the holy altar ere now; and I am Glo'ster's wife, I know not how, no more than the poor bird that trembling gazes on the dreaded serpent until immersed within its jaws, when it should have flown away. I cannot flee away; he hath a power over me which I cannot resist, a spell I cannot break, although it leads me on to death."

Anne threw her head upon Bridget's shoulder, as she uttered the last sentence, and wept bitterly. At length a page entered the garden, and announced a message from the Duke of Glo'ster, summoning her to Westminster, to be crowned queen. A deep shuddering pervaded Anne when she heard the news, and had not Bridget supported her she would have fallen upon the flower-bed by which she stood. When the page had received an answer, that she would attend shortly, and had retired, Anne again gave full vent to the current of her sorrows.

"Oh Bridget," said she, "I go to be made queen; happy should I be, to live with thee, and pour my sorrows on thy bosom, but now I shall have no one to listen to me. None but the liveried menials of a court, ready to fulfil their king's behest, to bring the goblet or the dagger. It will not be for aye,—Anne's days are numbered."

"Nay lady, say not so, his Grace may yet mean well," replied Bridget; "and you can again return to Crosby Hall, and I will show you all the flowers, and old Cornelius, the gardener, will

tell us all the names they bear. Stay not away sweet lady; I do love you as my mother, and will be more than a daughter to you. Importune his Grace to let you soon return, even when your coronation is over."

"I will! I will!" answered Anne, "my heart can never be wholly desolate while it has one like thee to cling to."

They again embraced each other, and separated in tears, just as Lord Stanley appeared at a turning of the garden walk to urge her departure. Steeds were in readiness in the court-yard; the one which lady Anne mounted was richly caparisoned, the trappings were of gold and silver, and the saddle cloth was emblazoned with the arms of England. A knight in armor held the bridle, and at the sound of the trumpet the lady and her attendants disappeared, and the ring of their horses' hoofs echoed through the arched hall, mingled with the dying cadence of silver-snaring trumpets.

### CHAPTER III.

KING RICHARD.—Rumor it abroad,

That Anne, my wife, is very grievous sick;

I will take order for her keeping close.

Look how thou dream'st!—I say again, give out

That Anne, my queen, is sick, and like to die;

About it, for it stands me much upon,

To stop all hopes.

Anne, my wife, hath bid the world good-night.

RICHARD III.

THERE was a sound of merriment in London: bells were ringing and bonfires blazing, and voices shouted in the streets "Long live King Richard and his Royal Queen." Many a brawl ensued, and many a sword leaped from its scabbard on the night that followed the coronation of Glo'ster; for parties met in the thoroughfares of the metropolis, as they returned from their late revels, and shout was opposed to shout, some exclaiming "Long live the house of Lancaster! Down with the white rose of York,"—which was answered by "Down with the bloody house of Lancaster! Long reign King Richard the Third!" for a strong feeling still existed among some of the citizens in favor of Queen Margaret. Others also exclaimed, "Long live King Edward the Fifth! Down with the Usurper," for Glo'ster had already become obnoxious to many through his acts of cruelty; indeed, there were proofs given afterward of his unpopularity, when such numbers revolted, and joined the standard of Richmond; for during the two years of his reign, and the one which preceded it, he had been the means of shedding more royal blood than had been spilt in many battles.

But, amid all these mingled sounds of joy and tumult, there was one sad heart, and one thoughtful brow on which the crown sat heavily—a cavern of dark ruminations, which the splendor of a diadem could not radiate; for Queen Anne had retired alone, to sigh over her sorrows in Crosby Hall, while King Richard kept his court, and pursued his daring plans in the palace.

Several days had elapsed since the coronation, and during that time the queen had resided in the south wing of the Hall, while the great dining-parlor and throne room were put in order, and

decorated with becoming splendor for a queen. It was a portion of King Richard's policy to spare no wealth, which might add to his greatness in outward show, and yet appear as if done solely for the comfort and love he bore to his wife, which could not fail of being rumored abroad, and would in the end serve as a cloak for the furtherance of his designs. It was his intention, after the death of Anne, to wed the daughter of Queen Elizabeth, widow of Edward the Fourth, and thereby prevent Richmond from laying any claim to the crown through marriage, thus hoping to crush forever the power of the house of Lancaster. How far his plans were successful, history has recorded; and Shakspeare has also thrown the poetry of undying thought over his deeds, which will live when the annals of history are doubted. It only comes within the limits of our narrative, to dwell upon such portions of his life as were connected with the fate of his queen, and took place within Crosby Hall.

All the old furniture had been removed from the great dining-parlor, and it had been fitted up in the most costly style; almost every quarter of the globe had contributed to its splendor: for the many wars in which England had engaged during the last three reigns, had made a great revolution in the domestic arrangements of the English, causing them to import and copy the manufactures and luxuries of foreign nations; there being as much competition among the English nobles in outwitting each other in showy grandeur, as there is in our day in two rival houses of Bloomsbury, endeavoring to eclipse each other in dress. The dining-parlor walls were now hung with rich arras of purple velvet, edged with gold, which reached down beyond the wainscoting; there was something heavy in its richness—an appearance of solemn splendor, but this might be owing to the dim light which streamed forth in such a variety of hues from the deep-dyed windows. The chairs—or rather stools, for such they might be termed when compared to what we now use, were also covered with velvet cushions, matching the drapery upon the walls; the wood-work was black and bright, and wore the appearance of ebony—and was richly carved, or rather heavily, for there was a massiveness in the foliage thereon entwined. In place of rushes the floor was now covered with carpet, or more properly tapestry, for the trees and flowers were worked upon it after the manner of modern embroidery, but ruder than a girl's first sampler, and much after that fashion. The trees were all made to rule, triangular, with a shaft in the centre for a stem, bearing no bad resemblance to a dunce's cap placed upon a walking stick. The flowers also appeared like cherries fastened upon a splinter of wood, each matching each, as old women array them to catch the eye of passing urchins. The colors were gaudy in the extreme, and at a distant glance gave you no bad idea of the drapery of harlequin. The table was of old English oak, covered also with a cloth of velvet, in union with that upon the walls. At one end of the room stood a recess: it was so formed as to face the entrance door; its leaves were thrown open, and displayed a rich array of plate, gold and silver, and in curious devices, some of them bearing the impress of the royal arms of England.

The iron lamps were also removed, and others of silver awung in their places, bearing the forms of flying dragons. Such was the appearance of the dining-parlor; part of the furniture had been removed from the palace, for Richard had his secret reason for keeping his queen at Crosby Hall, and had intended proposing what she so eagerly solicited.

But the throne-room above, if it were possible, excelled the lower apartment in grandeur. It was hung with the richest drapery, tapestry of gold and silver, on which was represented in no mean style of execution, the wars of the Titans: gods stood out in gold, upheaving many mountains of silver, and tearing up rocks from their bases, or grasping trees in their hands, while others showered the forked lightning from above, or darted down golden thunder-bolts. At the end of the apartment, facing the chamber door which we have already described, stood a splendid throne, or chair of state, and of sufficient dimensions to contain two persons; it was raised three steps from the floor, and surmounted by canopy of crimson velvet; the cushions and curtains were also of the same costly material. On the top of the canopy were two crowns, resembling those worn by the king and queen of England. A golden boar stood grinning above these, as if looking on the splendor below in triumph. This was the king's crest, when Duke of Gloucester.

The chairs, or settles—for they were shaped much like the high-backed benches we now see in tap-rooms, only lower at the back—were also covered with crimson velvet, white roses of silver were emblazoned upon them; over the fire-place, which alone was uncumbered with drapery, hung several valuable pictures, the productions of eminent masters, which were brought to England among other spoils of war. Marble statues too ornamented this apartment, such as had once graced the galleries of Italy. In this room were seated Queen Anne and Bridget Crosby, side by side, upon one of the richly covered seats. It was night, and silver lamps shed their bright beams over the apartment, the oil was perfumed, and sent forth a pleasant odor. Everything around wore an air of comfort and majesty; but the pale face of the Queen, unharmonized with the scene; there was a deep melancholy upon her brow, and a tear stood upon her silken lashes, even Bridget sat with folded hands, like one who dared not offer comfort, and was attentively listening to the Queen, who had paused in her conversation to gather strength to proceed, for she appeared greatly excited.

"Was it after the shedding of blood in the field of Tewksbury," said Bridget, "that the Prince your husband was murdered?"

"Alas!" sighed Queen Anne, "it was: had he fallen in the fight, he would have saved me many tears. But he died nobly, heaven rest his soul! asserting his rights, even in the teeth of those who took his life, and might now have been England's king, but for the dagger of my present lord."

"May heaven forgive him for the deed!" ejaculated Margaret.

"Amen," responded Anne; "and may the Holy Mother intercede for him, for murdering my husband's father."

"It was a dark day for England," said Bridget, "when they first gathered the white and red roses, and from the fairest flowers drew the foulest factions."

"Little rest has my country had for that hour," replied the Queen: "it has caused many a son to shed the life of his father, and father of son. Ah, who is he since the red rose fell! since the house of Lancaster was shorn of its plumes, for then I lost one who was a dove to me, but to his enemies a sweeping eagle. And I have been deluded by the wily tongue of a poisonous serpent, more subtle than that which tempted our first mother."

"Think you my lady," inquired Bridget, "that his majesty gave sanction to the destruction of the princes in the Tower?"

"I am too certain of it," replied the Queen, "even as much so, as if I had heard him give orders for their death; nay, I do believe that Dighton and Forrest, whom the King has appointed for our guards, were they who smothered the pretty babes: 't is well known that they destroyed Clarence, and for their villainies have been advanced by the King. Oh, Bridget, whenever I look at Forrest, methinks there is murder written on his brow; and it was such a face as his, that bent over me in my dream, with a dagger in his hand."

"But," continued Bridget, "I heard his majesty say that if any of your attendants were obnoxious, he begged you would discharge them; marry, I would not allow such a brace of unchanged knaves as they appear, to come in my presence."

"'T would be of no avail," replied Anne, "I should but remove the savage tiger for the prowling wolf, the fierce hyena for the subtle crocodile. No, he has too many instruments at his bidding for a frail woman to resist, and he hates me on account of my father, Warwick, who many a time overthrew his strongest measures."

"I fear there is too much truth in what you have stated," said Bridget. "I have a maiden aunt in Kent, let us fly to her: the honor and long services of my family will be a sure protection to us, and I have a friend in the mayor."

"I thank thee, Bridget," answered the Queen, "but I am King Richard's, and to fly, would be unworthy of the daughter of Warwick; moreover, the mayor is his friend, and already does his behest without a murmur; bethink thee, maiden, there is no escaping his power; beside, my father met his death valiantly, nor should his daughter be a craven."

"It ill becomes me," replied Bridget, "to advise one so high born as yourself, but a man can defend himself better than we, and to die in a battle-field, is far nobler than to be stabbed in bed; methinks, that even your brave father would fly from the odds of darkness and assassins."

"Mine may be but idle fears after all," said Anne; "and if they are not, there is none to mourn for me, I trow; neither do I wish to live, for there is a worm gnawing at my heart, whose work would soon be done, without the aid of steel or poison."

"It may be so," answered Bridget, "but methinks what he has done, would make any one fear—in sooth, I would not trust him. Oh do not, if it be but to save one heart from sorrowing, for mine would break, were you to leave me;

and oh, how awful to be murdered!" and Bridget buried her face in her hands, while her loud sobs at intervals, broke the silence that reigned in the apartment.

The Queen replied not for several minutes, but threw her arms around Bridget, while the tears gushed from her eyes, and trickled down her lovely cheeks, like rain-drops stealing down the stem of a lily; at length she said, "I will go with thee, take me to a place of safety, let me spend the remainder of my days with thee in retirement."

"You would not leave me to-night, fair wife," said King Richard, closing a secret door just behind them, by which he had entered, and stood unobserved long enough to hear that portion of their conversation which related to himself.

"Nay, thou givest one but a cold reception," continued he, knitting his brows, for neither of them had as yet spoken, but clung to each other in fear, for they had not the most remote idea of his being so near at hand until he spoke. At length the Queen mustered resolution enough to speak, and said in a tremulous voice:

"Methinks your Majesty might have apprized me of this honor, for we were unprepared for a visit at this hour."

"Beshrew me," answered King Richard, "for want of courtesy, I know it has become the vogue of late for the husband to give a long notice to the wife, in case she should have pledged her word to visit a play, or walk with some very dear friend, or be out at a dance, or have company in her own chamber whom it would be uncourteous to intrude upon; but by the holy-rood, I thought there had been exceptions among kings and queens."

"That exception extends to me," answered Anne, "and Bridget Crosby is the only one I would wish to honor with the name of friend; but, there are those around my person, when you are absent, who intrude upon my privacy at their pleasure, with as little ceremony as if they were my equals."

"True, fair wife," replied Gloucester with a sneer, "but methinks it is necessary that some one should look to your safety, were it only to receive your commands at parting, for I was not aware until to-night, that it was your intention to take so unceremonious a leave of us; marry you should have apprized us of your wishes, that an escort might have been in readiness, for it ill becomes a queen to journey alone."

"I scarcely deemed," said the Queen, "that your Majesty took so deep an interest in my weal, for many days have elapsed since you deigned to honor me with a visit."

"True," answered the King, "but thou canst not accuse us of paying no attention to thy comfort," casting his eyes around the splendid apartment, "and thou art well aware, I trow, that affairs stood not in the best position when my subjects made me to take the crown. But thou shalt not complain; I intend sharing thy company to-night, unless indeed," added he contemptuously, "thy fair counsellor Bridget would be a preferable companion."

"I intrude not myself upon her Majesty," said Bridget, undaunted by the King's presence, "but methinks it would ill become me to see her sit day after day alone, or her only companions

armed ruffians, villains who would murder their own father for gold, ill guests for a lady's society, I wot."

"Softly, fair maiden," said King Richard, gazing on the lovely and high-spirited Bridget, as much in admiration as anger, "by the Holy Paul, methinks thou holdest my friends in small repute, to speak thus lightly of them."

"I hold them in as high repute," replied Bridget Crosby, "as every honest person ought, and perchance as much as thou dost O King, for as they act to others, so would they be tempted to do with thee, for a higher guerdon."

"By the mass, I do believe thee, fair damsel," answered Richard, "and if they be such as thou sayest they are, I will be rid of them."

"If," answered Bridget, looking full upon the King's face, until he quailed beneath the purity of her glance, and the consciousness of his own guilt, "if—thou knowest they are; thou wert not wont to hearken to ifs, when thou orderedst Hastings to be beheaded."

"Now out upon thee for a cursed hag," shouted King Richard, drawing his sword, and shaking it in Bridget's face, while his rage scarcely left him utterance, "art thou to take note of my actions, and construe them as thou pleasest? out of my sight, I say, or by hell, I will draw a curtain over thine eyes."

"Nay, thou dardest not touch me," exclaimed Bridget, "King as thou art; thy betters were beholden to my father, and wert thou to draw one drop of my blood, there are ten thousand daggers in this city which would leap forth in revenge; but I leave thee—and thou fair Queen, beware of him. The Hall of my fathers has not yet been polluted with the blood of murder. Nay, thou dardest not to strike me, there is blood enough upon thy hands, I trow." And Bridget left the apartment, followed even to the door by Richard, with his sword pointed at, yet not daring to strike her. So much had her proud bearing, and the boldness with which she confronted him, overwaded his spirit, which shook beneath the terrible truths she had uttered.

For several moments he paced the apartment with rapid strides, his brow flushed with rage, and his dark eyes flashing wildly and frightfully upon the queen, who still maintained her seat, although trembling like the last leaf of autumn, and expecting every moment that the storm of his passion would burst forth. But, no; he had leant 'to smile and murder while he smiled,' and then walked himself into an apparent calmness, which was more dangerous than his anger, and approaching the queen he said:

"Hie thee to bed, sweet wife, I will be with thee anon."

The queen took up a silver candlestick, and lighting the waxen taper, walked with tearful eyes into the sleeping-room, without even summoning her female attendants. Without unrobing herself, she knelt before a crucifix, and remained in prayer for several minutes; when these were finished, she continued to kneel, with her hands clasped, and her long bright hair falling in disorder over her face. She was indeed a picture of beauty in sorrow, for as she removed her long tresses with one hand, and continued prostrate, the light fell upon one side of her face,

revealing a profile, such as hath but seldom been excelled in the fairest work of sculptor, or the sweetest dream of poet. At intervals she sighed deeply, and when she arose there was an unusual calmness upon her face, melancholy indeed, but resigned, like one whose mind is made up to meet the worst without a murmur. At length she divested herself of her rich robes, and with aching heart she laid her lovely head upon the pillow, and as if pain and care were wearied with keeping their long vigils, she soon fell asleep; but even while she slept, the bright taper revealed a tear that stood upon her silken lashes, like a sorrowing sentinel that kept watch.

#### CHAPTER IV.

We now return to the Throne-room, which adjoined the sleeping apartment, where Queen Anne had retired and left the king alone, who only remained so for a short time, for Dighton and Forrest, who were at hand, joined him soon after the queen's departure, and was seated at the splendid table with the king, conferring together in a low tone.

"Do you refuse me, then?" said the king, "I did not think to find you grown so scrupulous. I must find other hands to do my bidding."

"Not that we're scrupulous," said Forrest, "but I have grown cloyed with blood."

"Have you been shrived?" asked Richard.

"By the mass!" exclaimed Dighton, "he was but yesterday two hours before the priest, since when he has seemed like another man. If your majesty will consent, I will undertake the task alone, and with no faint heart to weaken my resolves, will stake my head for the fulfillment of your desires."

For a few moments the king was silent, so busy was he with his thoughts. Occasionally he would cast an inquiring glance at Forrest, who appeared wrapt in a mist of perfect perplexity. It would not be safe to let the assassins act separately, and the wicked judgment of the king at once resolved that one of two things was necessary—the co-action of Forrest, or his eternal secrecy and silence; nor was Richard one to consider an important secret safe in the keeping of a living person.

"Well, sirrah," said he, breaking the silence, "have you resolved? or must I seek elsewhere for friends less cool to do my bidding?"

"You need not persuade him, my liege," said Dighton; "I have a friend—"

"No doubt, no doubt; such knaves are plenty; but I'll none of them," said the king. "Forrest must resolve to aid me in this extremity. He is my good friend whom I can trust better than a stranger. What say you, Forrest? 'tis a round sum I give you for the work, and after that you can set up for gentleman; you know I have a care of your life, good Forrest."

"The king will not distrust my allegiance, as I am ever happy to serve him, the which past acts will show. But here is a woman—your queen, my liege—my sovereign mistress—and I cannot forget I once was human. Accredit me not with coldness to your royal self, to whom my life is due, but rather lay my weakness to the mother-blood within me. Some portion of her

softness tints my nature, and sometimes mutinies against the villain's part. 'Tis gone."

"And well gone," replied the king. "The chicken's flown, the hawk has perched again."

"What method shall we devise for the execution of our task?" asked Dighton; "the bowl, the dagger, or strangulation?"

"Well thought," said Richard. "It were best it were done as neatly and as quietly as possible. Could I but fix upon her the act of self-destruction, either dagger or bowl would do."

"That were not difficult," said Forrest, "and in the event——"

"I have thought of it, and it will not do," said the king. "If that were so, we should be charged with unkindness and neglect as the cause. No, we would give out that we love our queen. You are expert, my good friends, in these things; you must tax your wits heavier. Use your most convenient method, so it be sure. But where will you bestow her, when you have administered to her?"

"If your majesty would consent," said Dighton, "the garden might keep a secret——"

"In the garden, you think, would be the most secret," said the king.

"'Twould be done the speediest, I trow," replied Dighton, "for we might dig a pit in a little time deep enough to hold her."

"Right," said Forrest, "and the best place would be in the gravel-walk, which would escape suspicion, as we might cover it again, and trample it to its former appearance."

"Hold!" said the king "this must not be; cannot you dispatch her so as to make it appear that she died a natural death, for now I bethink me I have given it out that she is grievous ill, and would fain have her buried with great splendour, publicly."

"Not well," answered Dighton, "for though we smothered the young princes in the Tower, and did it as quietly as possible without much force, still there was a difference in their faces to what there would have been had they died naturally, for your majesty may be sure that they will make a little resistance, in spite of our persuading them that it is all for their benefit."

"Well, you know the best," said Richard, "and I leave it entirely to yourself. Could you do the deed without marks of violence I would increase your reward; but if not, then bury her in the garden. And now good night, and let me see you early to-morrow at the palace," saying which, he left the apartment, muffled in a large cloak, and walked alone to the palace, unknown even to his menials.

He had not long retired before Bridget Crosby entered by the private door, by which the king obtained ingress. As she entered without making the slightest noise, neither Dighton nor Forrest perceived her, for they were too busily engaged in devising a plan to dispatch the queen without leaving marks of violence that they might obtain the increased reward. Bridget Crosby stood in the shadow of the rich drapery that covered the wall, and listened to their various schemes for murdering the queen. We will not attempt to give their conversation, for it was such as blanched the brow of the brave Bridget, and drove the blood coldly back into her heart; for

they hesitated not to argue over the methods taken to dispatch Clarence and the young princes, and entered into the details as minutely as an anatomist, only in language too horrid to be repeated. At length they decided upon first having the pit in readiness, in case they should not succeed in taking away her life without marked violence, and they retired for that purpose.

They were no sooner gone than Bridget entered the queen's apartment, and acquainted her with what she had heard, advising her also to prepare for her escape by the private door; to which she readily consented, and was soon in readiness for her departure, refusing to take with her the least trifle that had been presented by the king, and only confining herself to a few necessities, which were her own before her marriage with Glo'ster, together with her jewels. But an unforeseen accident prevented their escape, for in closing the secret door, Bridget had neglected to secure the spring outside; in vain she tried to force it open by main strength; she might as well have attempted to force down the many walls. The door that led to the staircase in the garden had been secured by the murderers when they went out,—this was done by their taking down a thick bar of iron which fell upon a staple; there was no means of securing the door inside to prevent their return, neither was there any fastening to the queen's sleeping room. They consulted together for a few moments, and, finding that all means of escape were for the present cut off, again entered the bed room, and placed a table against the door, which would at least leave them a little time to parley with the murderers, who were not long in returning from the pleasure, and attempted immediately to force open the door.

"What is your business with the queen?" said Bridget.

"We will acquaint her in person," replied Forrest, "and in return might demand yours, for his majesty said that she was alone."

"Mine is to protect her from the design of his majesty," answered Bridget, "and to bid you retire, or I will arouse the household."

"But you must first reach them," said Dighton, forcing open the door, and overturning the table.

"You would not murder your queen!" said Bridget, turning pale as she spoke, and gazing upon the hardened brow of the ruffians; "she has never injured either of you,—if it be gold that tempts you to this act, I will give you more than this deed will bring you; and methinks you have shed blood enough already."

"By our Lady, the maiden speaketh fairly," replied Forrest. "I am for the gold, and let the bloody-minded king do his own work. I have too much upon my hands already."

"So have not I," replied Dighton; "we are the king's subjects, and bound to his behests, which if we do not fulfil, our lives are not worth so much as a struggling kitten's in the Thames."

"Now, out upon thee," said Forrest, "hast thou forgot what vows thou didst make, after our last act, and swore by Holy Paul, thou never wouldst do the like again?"

"True, noble chicken-heart," answered Dighton, "but I have been shrived for that deed, and thus I do repent,"—saying which, he plunged a



dagger into the back of the queen, who was kneeling before the crucifix, and she fell forward with the force of the blow, grasping the feet of the holy image in the agonies of death. Bridget flew to her assistance, and bent in mute sorrow over the bleeding form of the queen, for so unexpectedly had the blow been dealt, that even Forrest stood for a moment wrapt in speechless astonishment; then turning, he exclaimed, " remorseless villian!" and plunged a dagger up to the hilt in his bosom. "Thou wouldst have told the king of my willingness to have spared the lady, wouldst thou," continued Forrest, gazing upon his companion, who lay at his feet; "tell him when ye meet together in hell, damned fiend! It was thou who first steeled my heart to murder, first drew me from the path of honesty, and poisoned my ears with reports how gold was won in serving kings—making me peril my soul for filthy lucre, and when I refused to plunge deeper into crime, threatened to bring me to justice. Nay, grin at me wretch, and gnash thy teeth, thou grayheaded murderer, thou hast grown hoary in crime."

"Oh!—oh!—curse thee," groaned Dighton, and throwing out his arms, expired, his lips curled up even in death, as if a curse yet lingered upon them, and he had died without giving it utterance. The light from a large waxen taper fell upon the cold faces of the dead, as they lay outstretched upon the floor: that of the queen's was calm as one that sleepeth, but her beautiful ringlets were unbound, and the gory stream that issued from her wound, mingled with her long hair. Bridget knelt beside her with folded hands, and anxious eyes gushing with tears, that fell upon the cold bosom of the queen. Forrest stood by, with one hand shading his eyes, as if to hide himself from the horrid sight, while his other yet grasped the dagger which was dyed with the blood of his companion. The silver crucifix glittered in the pale light, and the rich drapery of the bed hung in light and shadow, as

it fell upon the folds of the hangings. Forrest then retired, and the hoofs of his steed rung upon the silence of the night, as he hurried from CROSBY HALL.